

# Extending Gesture

A Colloquium at the University of Edinburgh

## Invitation

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‘If I write, this strange hand has already slipped into my writing hand’,  
(Jean-Luc Nancy [2]).

My hand moves out ahead of me in writing – as Jacques Derrida has conceived it, it is both blind and anticipatory, giving itself over to both in order to touch upon the unknown. Yet in doing so, the unknown touches all along this act; this embodied gesture quivers with unknowability.

The uncanniness of the embodied nature of gesture is coupled with a lack of knowing what begins and begets us in these movements that characterise our being in the world. Gesture, as defined by Vilém Flusser, is ‘a movement of the body or of a tool connected to the body for which there is no satisfactory causal explanation’[3].

This intimate colloquium requests your presence in order to tease out such complex and unanswerable questions as: What provokes the pulsating body to dance? Or the scribbling hand to scratch? What are the urges and itches that manifest the various gestures of our being? What is the character of their inception and how do we conceptualise them? What too, is this strangeness that shadows our gestures? What is its unique character in relation to each particular gesture? How can we capture and de–scribe such strange movements? What can the pauses in–between the gesture tell us about its nature? What role does anticipation play in

gesture?

### **Invitation**

We invite proposals (of any length or form), on the embodied nature of gesture, which may be drawn from any field of inquiry, such as: dance, visual image, architecture, writing, theatre, signing, music, and may contemplate the minutest of gestures, such as those Vilém Flusser philosophises: the gesture of planting, the gesture of searching, the gesture of photographing, the gesture of making etc.

As a 'gesture of invitation' and an attempt to 'extend' this subject, we are intent on attending to the form of our gathering, the *poesis* of our interaction, in order to create a space for dialogue and discussion; one that corresponds to the salon ethos of *conversation* and of the colloquium's *speaking together*. Thus, we offer you one hour to do with as you please. For example, you may choose to present for thirty minutes and allow discussion of your piece for the remainder of the hour, or indeed, you may choose to workshop an idea for the entire hour.

We would like you to receive this as an opportunity to participate in the conversation in a manner which is most befitting your research, your subject, your interests. You may even take this as an opportunity to try a form of presentation for your research that up to now, you may not have had a chance to assay. We simply request, in return, that your contribution reciprocates the ethos of 'opening out', and is a gesture that proffers.

To further enhance the discussion-based aspect of this colloquium and to create an intimate atmosphere of conversation, presentations will be kept to a low number of twelve in total (including invited 'keynotes'), over the two days. In addition, there will be further

time for exchange at a roundtable gathering at the end of each day, to draw the presentations and conversations together. The objective is to facilitate a space to work together as a group and to allow time for speaking that develops in accord with listening.

As an extension of this unique collaboration we also plan to publish a publication of the material, which will be discussed at the colloquium.

Enquiries and proposals to: Tami Gadir and  
Fiona Hanley at  
edinburghextending@gmail.com  
by **10th of August 2012**.

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[1] Francesca Woodman. Untitled, New York, 1979-80. © *The Estate of Francesca Woodman George and Betty Woodman*.

[2] Jean-Luc Nancy, *Corpus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 19.

[3] Vilém Flusser, *Gesten* (Braunschweig: Boolmann, 1991), Translation of this quotation by Nancy Roth:  
8 [http://www.nancyroth.com/?page\\_id=97](http://www.nancyroth.com/?page_id=97)

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